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Once Upon a Time in KRYPTON...
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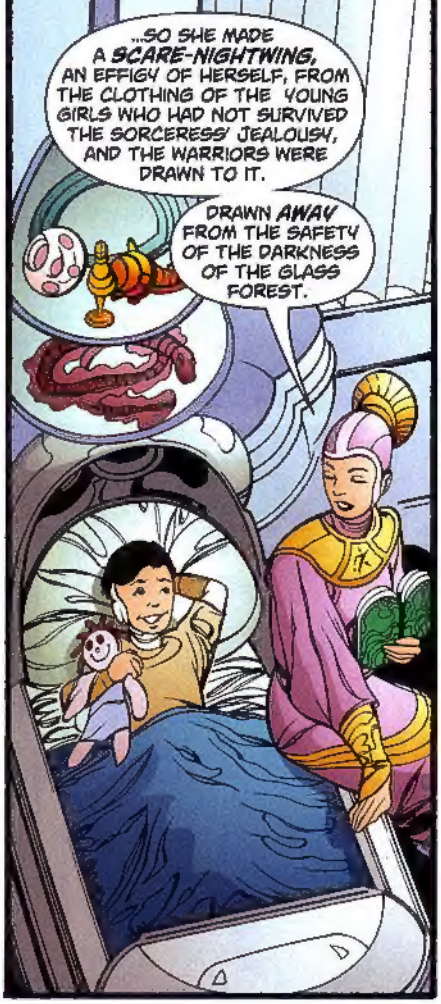
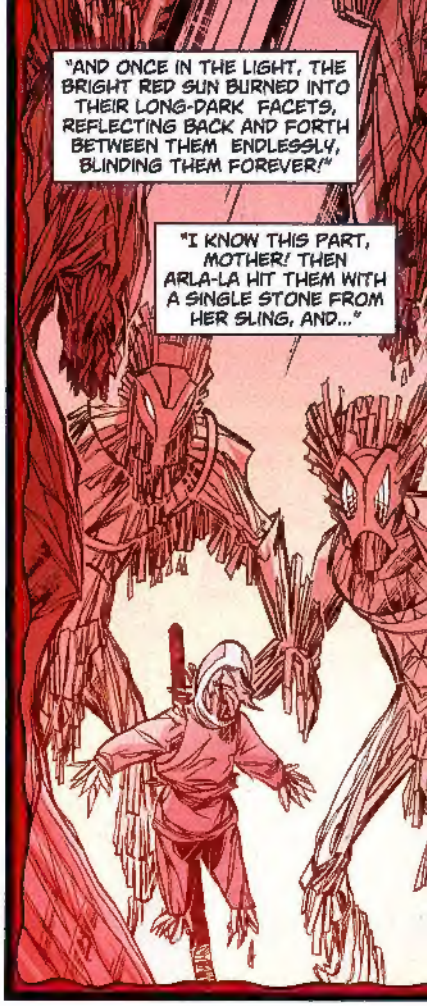
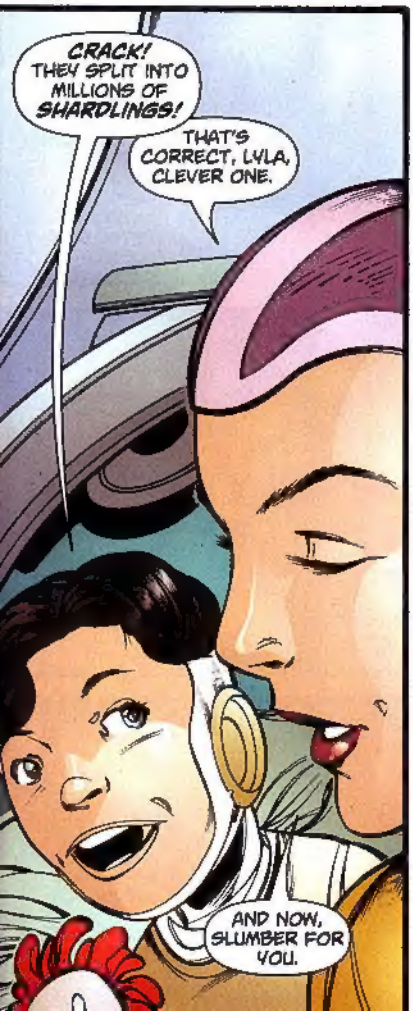
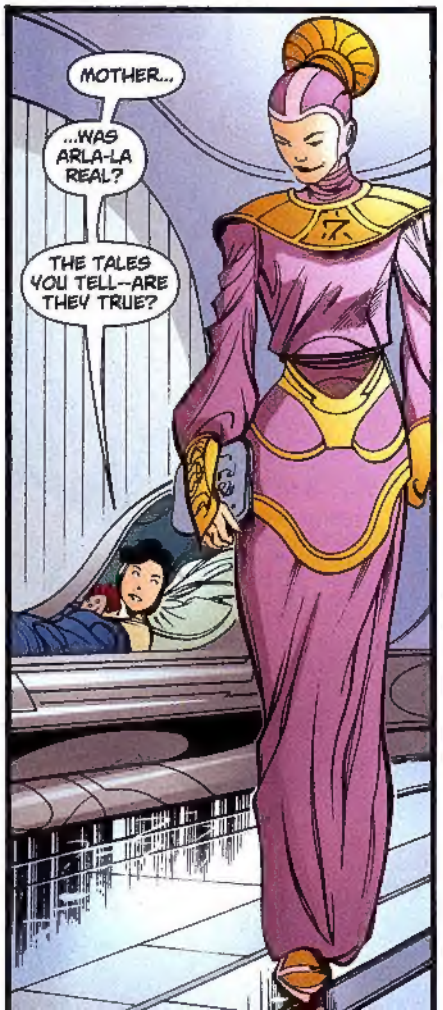
JURGENS
NOWLAN

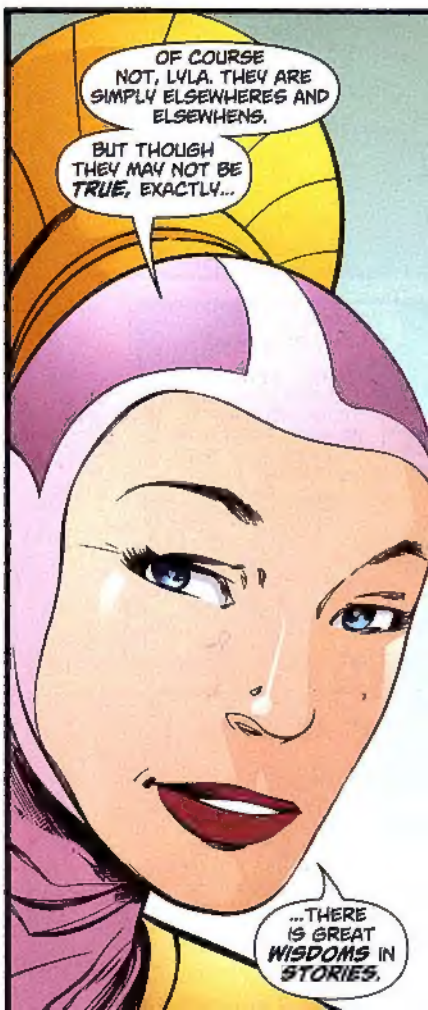
AGES AGO, 200 CYCLES BEFORE THE RISE OF THE HOUSE OF EL, ON THE FOURTH PLANET FROM A RED STAR NOW LONG DIMMED...
...BUT ARLA-LA, THE PRAETOR'S DAUGHTER, KNEW THAT SHE COULD NOT HIDE FROM THE SORCERESS' CRUEL CHANDELIER DEMONS FOREVER...

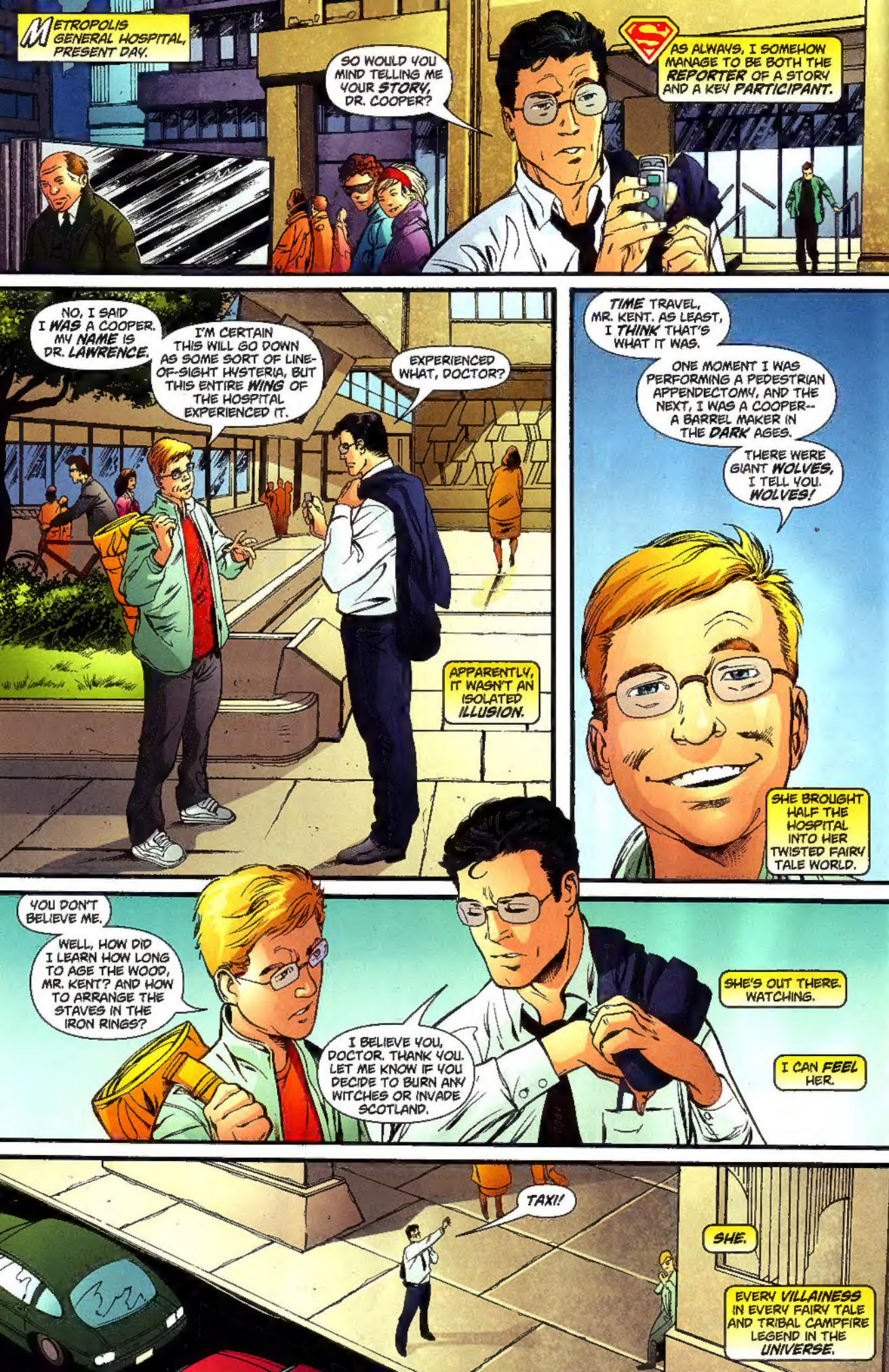

...SO SHE MADE A SCARE-NIGHTWING, AN EFFIGY OF HERSELF, FROM THE CLOTHING OF THE YOUNG GIRLS WHO HAD NOT SURVIVED THE SORCERESS' JEALOUSY, AND THE WARRIORS WERE DRAWN TO IT.
DRAWN AWAY FROM THE SAFETY OF THE DARKNESS OF THE GLASS FOREST.


"AND ONCE IN THE LIGHT, THE BRIGHT RED SUN BURNED INTO THEIR LONG-DARK FACETS, REFLECTING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THEM ENDLESSLY, BLINDING THEM FOREVER!"
"I KNOW THIS PART, MOTHER! THEN ARLA-LA HIT THEM WITH A SINGLE STONE FROM HER SLING, AND..."


CRACK! THEY SPLIT INTO MILLIONS OF SHARDLINGS!
THAT'S CORRECT, LYLA, CLEVER ONE.
AND NOW, SLUMBER FOR YOU.


MOTHER...
...WAS ARLA-LA REAL?
THE TALES YOU TELL--ARE THEY TRUE?


OF COURSE NOT, LYLA. THEY ARE SIMPLY ELSEWHERES AND ELSEWHENS.
BUT THOUGH THEY MAY NOT BE TRUE, EXACTLY...
...THERE IS GREAT WISDOMS IN STORIES.


METROPOLIS GENERAL HOSPITAL, PRESENT DAY.
SO WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME YOUR STORY, DR. COOPER?
AS ALWAYS, I SOMEHOW MANAGE TO BE BOTH THE REPORTER OF A STORY AND A KEY PARTICIPANT.
NO, I SAID I WAS A COOPER. MY NAME IS DR. LAWRENCE.
I'M CERTAIN THIS WILL GO DOWN AS SOME SORT OF LINE-OF-SIGHT HYSTERIA, BUT THIS ENTIRE WING OF THE HOSPITAL EXPERIENCED IT.
EXPERIENCED WHAT, DOCTOR?
APPARENTLY, IT WASN'T AN ISOLATED ILLUSION.
TIME TRAVEL, MR. KENT. AS LEAST, I THINK THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
ONE MOMENT I WAS PERFORMING A PEDESTRIAN APPENDECTOMY, AND THE NEXT, I WAS A COOPER-- A BARREL MAKER IN THE DARK AGES.
THERE WERE GIANT WOLVES, I TELL YOU. WOLVES!
SHE BROUGHT HALF THE HOSPITAL INTO HER TWISTED FAIRY TALE WORLD.
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.
WELL, HOW DID I LEARN HOW LONG TO AGE THE WOOD, MR. KENT? AND HOW TO ARRANGE THE STAVES IN THE IRON RINGS?
I BELIEVE YOU, DOCTOR. THANK YOU. LET ME KNOW IF YOU DECIDE TO BURN ANY WITCHES OR INVADE SCOTLAND.
SHE'S OUT THERE. WATCHING.
I CAN FEEL HER.
TAXI!
SHE.
EVERY VILLAINESS IN EVERY FAIRY TALE AND TRIBAL CAMPFIRE LEGEND IN THE UNIVERSE.

AWAKE IN THE DARK

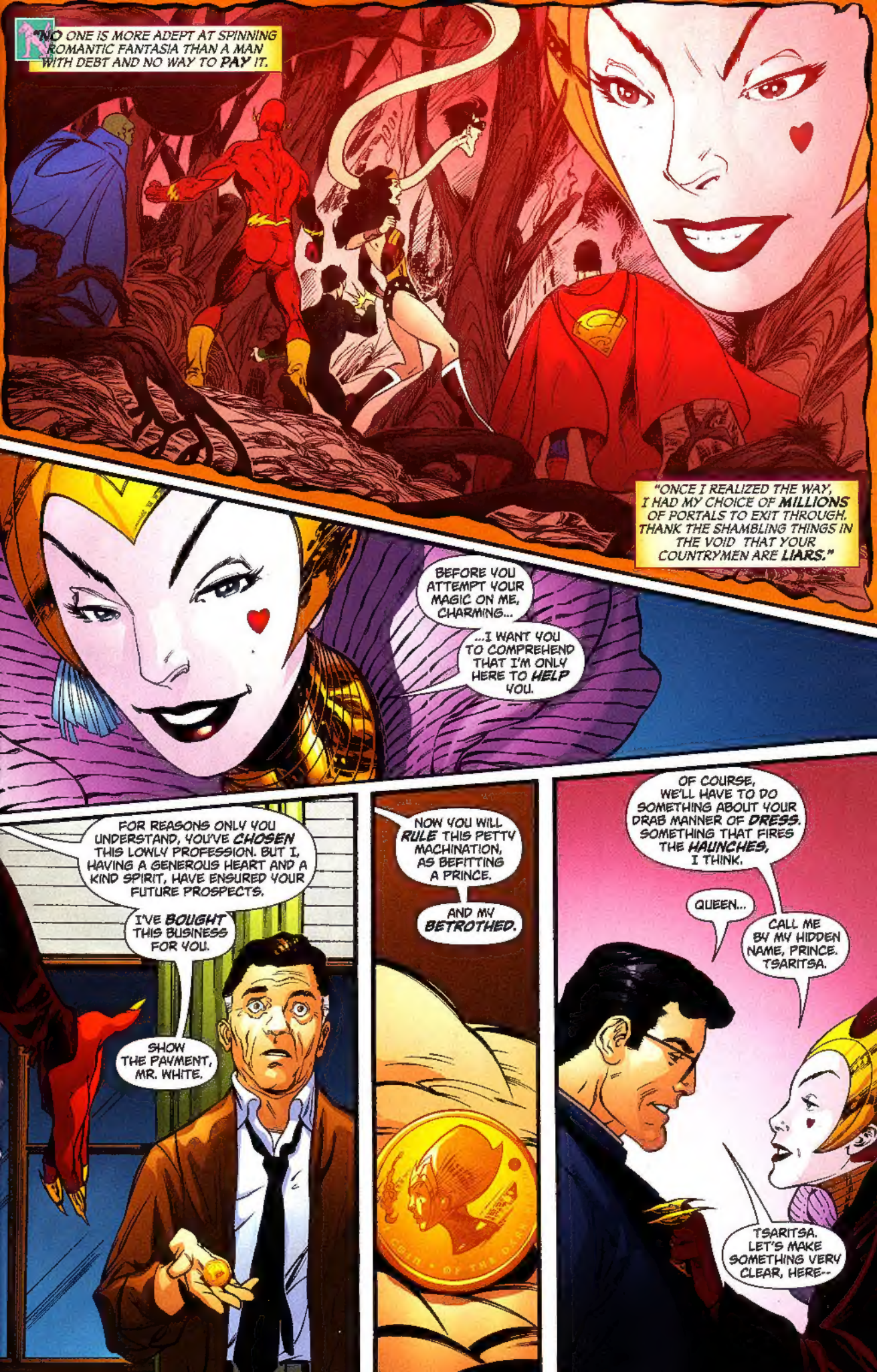
GAIL SIMONE – WRITER • JOHN BYRNE –PENCILLER
NELSON, MARC CAMPOS & OCLAIR ALBERT – INKERS • GUY MAJOR – COLORIST
ROB LEIGH – LETTERER • JEANINE SCHAEFER – ASST. EDITOR • EDDIE BERGANZA – EDITOR

SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

THE STORIES ARE ALL THE SAME. SO ALIKE IN FASHION THAT IT'S A WONDER THEY LIVE ON, OFTEN BEYOND THE CULTURES THAT SPAWNED THEM.
THEY ALL BEGIN WITH, "ONCE UPON A TIME..."
...AND THEY ALL END WITH MY GRISLY **DEATH.**
FALLING FROM JAGGED CLIFFS, DANCING WITH IRON BOOTS STILL HOT FROM THE FIRE, CONSUMED BY BEASTS.
I'VE SUPPED A FULL BOWL OF AGONY AND TEARS.
AND YET, SO MANY STORIES REMAIN **HIDDEN.**
TALES OF FAT LITTLE CHILDREN **DEVOURED** AND PRINCESSES **DEBASED.**
TALES OF A THOUSAND HANDSOME **PRINCES** BENT TO MY **WILL** AND THEN **DISCARDED.**
HISTORY HAS **FORGOTTEN** THE MULTITUDE OF MY **VICTORIES.**
HOW PLEASANT IT SHALL BE THEN, THIS ONE OCCASION...
PERRY WHI
Editor-in-Chie
...TO HAVE THE STORYTELLERS AS **MY** ALLIES.

KNOCK KNOCK, MR. WHITE.
WHAT THE DEVIL...?
LOOK, LADY. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT I'M VERY BUSY RIGHT NOW, AND I...
TUT, TUT, TUT, PERRY. LET US NOT BE IMPOLITE.
ALTHOUGH I CONFESS, YOU DO HAVE A CERTAIN AVUNCULAR CHARM...
...I'M HERE ON BUSINESS, DEAR.
I WISH TO BUY YOUR ENTIRE CONCERN-- PROPERTIES, GOODS, AND SERFS ALIKE.
THINGS HAVE BEEN... STRAINED BETWEEN PERRY AND ME, LATELY.
AWKWARD ENOUGH THAT HE EFFECTIVELY DEMOTED ME TO THE PLANET'S CRIME BEAT, TYPICALLY WHERE NEW REPORTERS EARN THEIR STRIPES--
--OR OLD WARHORSES ARE PUT OUT TO PASTURE.
BUT WITH THIS HOSPITAL STORY, ONE I WAS AN EYEWITNESS TO, IN FACT--
--I HAVE A CHANCE TO REBUILD, AT LEAST A BIT.
I HOPE.

HELLO, KELLY. HAVE YOU SEEN LOIS THIS MORNING?
'FRAID NOT, MR. KENT. LAST I HEARD, SHE WAS STILL WORKIN' THAT IMMIGRANT SMUGGLING STORY.
NO TROUBLE AT THE KENT-LANE HOMESTEAD, I HOPE?
Er...
SORRY. I'M SORTA NOSEY.
EVERYONE HERE IS, KELLY. I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH PERRY. THANKS ANYWAY.
PERRY, I'VE GOT THE METRO GENERAL NOTES, IF YOU'D LIKE...
OH, BELOVED...
...I'M AFRAID HE'S INDISPOSED.
SHUT THE DOOR, CHARMING, UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR LONGTIME DECEPTIONS TO FAIL.
PERRY WHITE Editor-in-Chief
YOU.
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
MY SWEET, INNOCENT PRINCE... I KNOW ALL LEGENDS.
AND YOU'VE MADE YOURSELF THE VERY STUFF OF LEGEND, HAVE YOU NOT?
YES. YES, YOU HAVE. THAT MAKES YOU MY DROSS.
WE, THE JUSTICE LEAGUE...WE TRAPPED YOU.
YES. QUITE INGENIOUSLY, I MUST PRONOUNCE.
IN A BOOK OF TAX LAW.
BUT YOU FORGOT HUMAN NATURE, CHARMING.


"NO ONE IS MORE ADEPT AT SPINNING ROMANTIC FANTASIA THAN A MAN WITH DEBT AND NO WAY TO PAY IT.
"ONCE I REALIZED THE WAY, I HAD MY CHOICE OF MILLIONS OF PORTALS TO EXIT THROUGH. THANK THE SHAMBLING THINGS IN THE VOID THAT YOUR COUNTRYMEN ARE LIARS."
BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT YOUR MAGIC ON ME, CHARMING...
...I WANT YOU TO COMPREHEND THAT I'M ONLY HERE TO HELP YOU.
FOR REASONS ONLY YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU'VE CHOSEN THIS LOWLY PROFESSION. BUT I, HAVING A GENEROUS HEART AND A KIND SPIRIT, HAVE ENSURED YOUR FUTURE PROSPECTS.
I'VE BOUGHT THIS BUSINESS FOR YOU.
SHOW THE PAYMENT, MR. WHITE.
NOW YOU WILL RULE THIS PETTY MACHINATION, AS BEFITTING A PRINCE.
AND MY BETROTHED.
OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR DRAB MANNER OF DRESS. SOMETHING THAT FIRES THE HAUNCHES, I THINK.
QUEEN...
CALL ME BY MY HIDDEN NAME, PRINCE. TSARITSA.
TSARITSA. LET'S MAKE SOMETHING VERY CLEAR, HERE--

DO NOT REJECT ME, CHARMING.
I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY. I CAN FORCE LOVE AND CONTENTEDNESS DOWN YOUR THROAT LIKE MAGGOTS AND CAKES.
THE EVIL ONES, THE CURDLED MEN YOU IMPRISON...
...I COULD FREEZE THEM TO ICE WITH A THOUGHT. I COULD HAVE WHALES CHEW THEIR BONES IN THEIR BEDS FOR YOUR PLEASURE!
TSARITSA, YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ME. I'M NOT MARRIED TO WONDER WOMAN--THE ONE YOU CALL SNOW WHITE.
SO YOU HAVE SAID.
DO YOU KNOW, PERCHANCE, WHERE YOUR REAL, MISBEGOTTEN, HAG-HEADED, COMMONER OF A HOUNDSWOMAN WIFE IS, THEN, PRINCE?
BECAUSE I DO.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE. WHERE IS SHE?
SHE'S BEING GUARDED BY MY NEW HUNTSMAN, FAIR AND TRUE.
A YOUNG MAN WITH A FLAW IN HIS METTLE, ONE I RATHER CHEERFULLY EXPLOITED.
SO PERHAPS YOU MIGHT WISELY LISTEN TO MY DEMANDS.
BECAUSE I BELIEVE HE HAS HIS EYE ON HER.
AND I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE HE ISN'T UTTERLY BEREFT OF SANITY.

I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED, MS. LANE. BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO BE.
I SHOT THOSE MEN, THOSE TERRIBLE MEN. YOU'RE SAFE.
YOU'RE WITH ME. WILLIS.
YOU'RE SAFE.
MMMMPH.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THE GAG... I NEEDED YOU TO BE QUIET.
I DIDN'T LIKE HITTING YOU. I NEVER WANTED TO HIT YOU.
ANYWAY, HERE.
WE CAN TALK. NO ONE EVER COMES HERE.
LOOK, I KNOW IT SEEMS LIKE I'M JUST A STALKER, BUT IT'S NOT ABOUT THAT. IT'S ABOUT RESPECT, AND, AND... AND LOVE, AND--
WILLIS.
YOU HAVE NO CONCEPT OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE.
CLARK WILL FIND ME, WILLIS. HE'S THE BEST REPORTER I KNOW.
HE'LL FIND ME.
AND THIS WON'T END WELL FOR YOU.
MS. LANE... LOIS.
THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WANTING TO ASK YOU SINCE I FIRST SAW YOUR PICTURE.
WILL YOU GO TO THE PROM WITH ME?

YOU'LL NEVER FIND HER. THE POOR TOWN'S FOOL WHO ABSCONDED WITH HER DOESN'T EVEN KNOW I'M HELPING TO HIDE HER.
YOU HAVE A CHOICE, PRINCE.
LIVE WITH ME, MINGLE YOUR MAGIC WITH MINE. SLAKE YOUR THIRST AGAINST MY THROAT.
TASTE OF MY FRUIT, CHARMING.
COME TO MY REALM, TO MY PLACE OF POWER.
WHO KNOWS, YOU MAY BE THE ONE TO VANQUISH MORE THAN MY HEART.
YOU MAY WIN YOUR FREEDOM.
BITE THE APPLE.
BITE THE APPLE, YOU POXIED WEAKLING, OR HEAR THE DYING SQUEALS OF YOUR SOW FOR ALWAYS!
WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?
AS YOU WISH, MY QUEEN.

AND JUST LIKE THAT...
...I'M ON KRYPTON.
MAY THAT GESTURE BE THE FIRST MOMENT IN A LIFETIME OF OBEDIENCE, PRINCE.
NO.
NOT KRYPTON. THE AIR IS WRONG, AND I STILL FEEL SOME OF MY POWERS.
IT'S SOME SORT OF FAIRY-TALE VERSION OF MY HOME PLANET.
NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT I REFUSED YOU A SPORTING CHANCE, BELOVED.
RETRIEVE MY SHAWL FROM THE TOWER, AND I SHALL SET YOU FREE.
~ THE FOREST.
IT WAS A GENUINE GEOGRAPHICAL ACCIDENT ON KRYPTON, BUT EVERY SCHOOLCHILD HAS HEARD THE LEGENDS.
TALES OF HAUNTINGS AND CHILDREN EATEN BY CRYSTAL DEMONS.
OF COURSE, THE TOWER IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GLASS FOREST, MY DEAREST ONE.
AND WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO COOPERATE, QUEEN?
A VERY LUCID QUESTION WITH A DELIGHTFULLY SIMPLE ANSWER.

YOU DIE BLOODIED BY FANG AND CLAW!
A SNAGRIFF.
A KRYPTONIAN DRAGON.
UNNGH.
AND IT'S MAGICAL.
OF COURSE.
urrhhk.
SO LET'S.
...TAKE INVENTORY.
FLIGHT'S OUT. STRENGTH IS FADING CLEARLY I'M NOT INVULNERABLE IN THIS REALM.
IT'S COMING BACK.
IN THE STORIES, THE BEAST WAS ALMOST UNKILLABLE.
IT WAS FAMOUSLY VICIOUS AND HUNGRY.

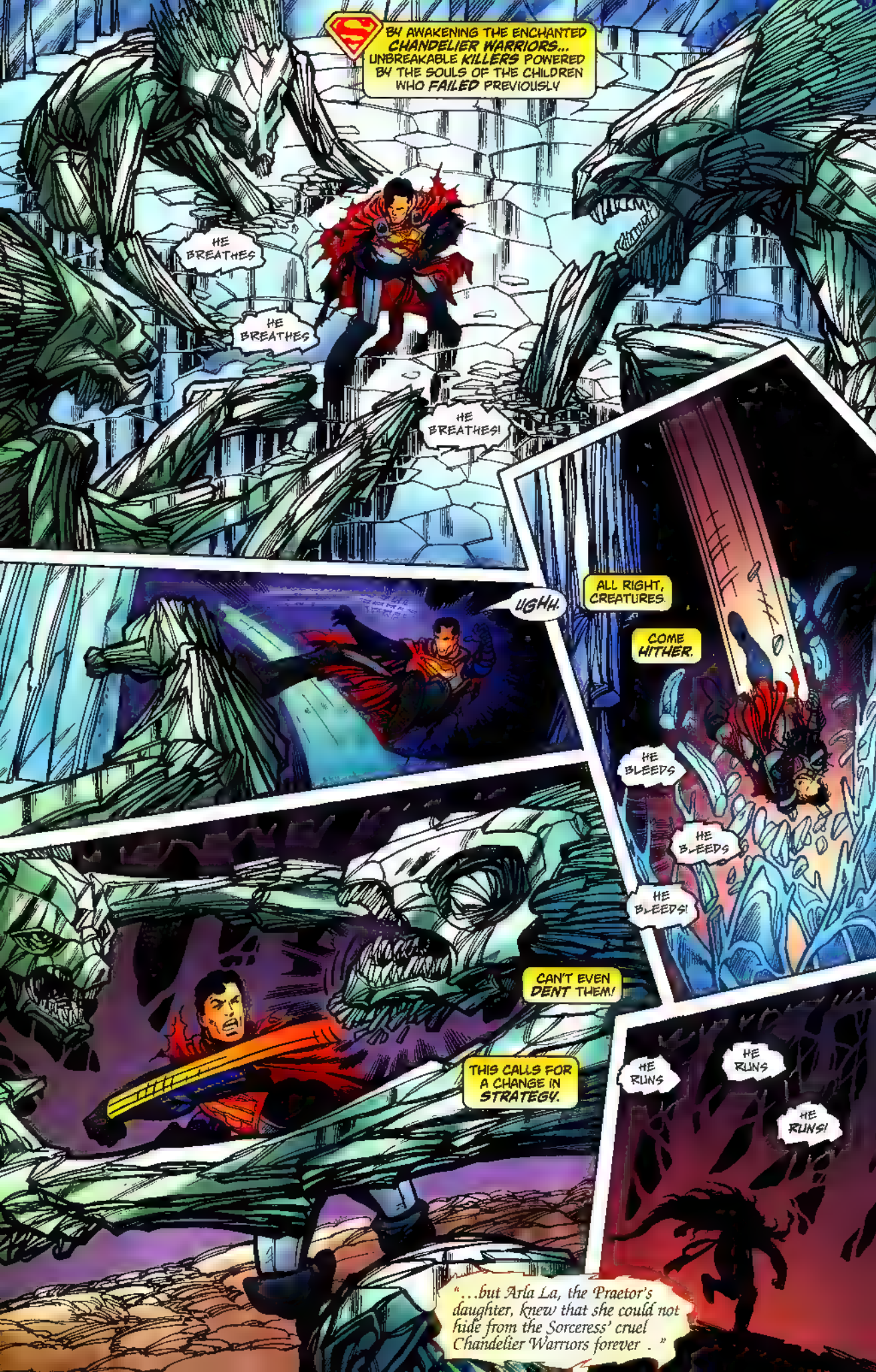
BUT NO ONE EVER SAID IT WAS SMART.
THAT'S IT.
FOCUS ON ME, CREATURE.
DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION--
--TO WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
KRAK-KOOM

YEP.
CLEARLY NOT INVULNERABLE HERE.
THE CRYSTALLIZED TREES AND FOLIAGE HAVE ALREADY SEALED THE ENTRANCE THE DRAGON MADE.
NO CHOICE NOW BUT TO HEAD FOR THE TOWER.
THE STRIPED RIVER.
I KNOW YOU'RE HERE, TSARITSA.
OH, YE KNOW YER YARNS, BOYO
YE KEN THAT WHERE THERE BE A STRIPED RIVER...

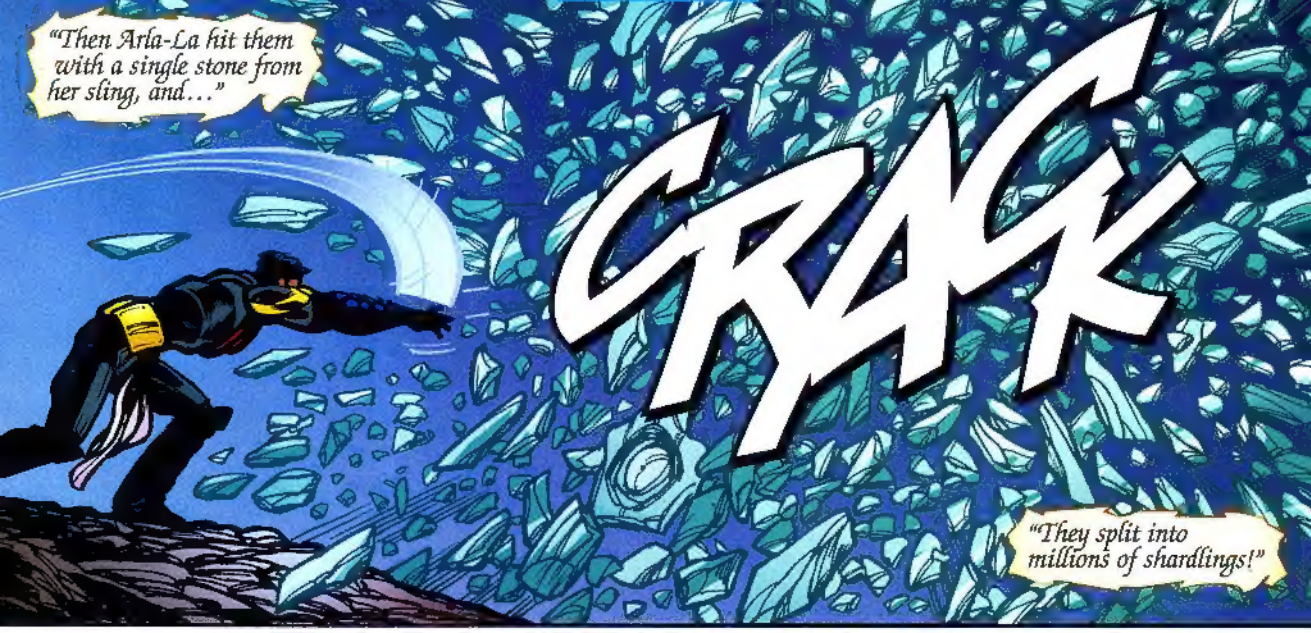
THERE MUST ALSO BE A STRIPED RIVER WITCH.
COME TA SEE THE DROWNIN' POOL, DID YE?
THEM'S THE FACES OF GLUTTONY, BOYO. LOOK WELL, FOR THEM ARE THE FACES OF WANT.
LOVE, FOOD, WEALTH AND VENGEANCE. THE DESIRES OF THE CHILD ARE MANY, AND ALL ARE SATED HERE.
WILL YE SEE MY WARES, CHILD OF MAN?
WILL YER HEART'S WISH BE IN MY DAMPENED CHAMBERS?
NO.
LOIS.
Ahhh.
SO DELICIOUS, THE NEED AND TERROR
LOIS!
GOODBYE, PRINCE

I...
I'VE FAILED.
STAY WITH US
STAY
WE'RE SO COLD
STAY. STAY FOREVER
IN THE STORY, IF YOU TOUCHED THE DROWNING POOL, YOU WERE LOST FOREVER.
NO.
NO!
I SEE YOU REMEMBERED THE LOOPHOLE, PRINCE.
MY DESIRE WAS FOR ANOTHER'S WELFARE. SO I HAD ONLY TO FREE MY OWN SPIRIT.
I MUST SAY, I'M DELIGHTED ONE OF YOUR SPECIES SURVIVED. THE FORGOTTEN FABLES OF DEAD WORLDS ARE RATHER A SORE SUBJECT FOR ME.
TO THE TOWER THEN? BEFORE YOUR HEART'S DESIRE DIES BY BLADE?

AND IN AN INSTANT, SHE'S GONE AGAIN.
AT LEAST I KNOW I HAVE MY HEAT VISION, OR SOME WEAKENED PERCENTAGE OF IT.
AS SHE SAID... TO THE TOWER.
IT'S A DEATH TRAP, OF COURSE.
IN THE STORY OF ARLA-LA, ANY CHILD WHO RETRIEVED THE SORCERESS' SHAWL WOULD RULE THE LAND AT HER SIDE.
ONLY ARLA-LA DID IT OUT OF KINDNESS, NOT GREED.
ALL RIGHT, TSARITSA. I'LL CLIMB THE TOWER. I'LL SPRING THE TRAP.
BUT YOU HAD BETTER KEEP YOUR WORD.
THE PROBLEM IS, ONCE THE CHILD HAD CLIMBED THE TOWER. .
...AND ENTERED THE SORCERESS' FORMER BEDCHAMBER--
--THE SIMPLE ACT OF REMOVING THE THING SEALED THEIR DOOM.


BY AWAKENING THE ENCHANTED CHANDELIER WARRIORS... UNBREAKABLE KILLERS POWERED BY THE SOULS OF THE CHILDREN WHO FAILED PREVIOUSLY
HE BREATHES
HE BREATHES
HE BREATHES!
UGHH.
ALL RIGHT, CREATURES.
COME HITHER.
HE BLEEDS
HE BLEEDS
HE BLEEDS!
CAN'T EVEN DENT THEM!
THIS CALLS FOR A CHANGE IN STRATEGY.
HE RUNS
HE RUNS
HE RUNS!
"...but Arla La, the Praetor's daughter, knew that she could not hide from the Sorceress' cruel Chandelier Warriors forever."

THEY MAY BE INVULNERABLE TO BRUTE FORCE, BUT FORTUNATELY, I HAVE A FEW ADVANTAGES THE CHILDREN IN THE STORY DIDN'T HAVE--
HE DIES
HE DIES
HE DIES!
"So she made an effigy of herself... and the Warriors were drawn to it..."
LIKE HEAT VISION.
AND A FOREST FULL OF ORGANIC MAGNIFYING LENSES.
"And once in the light, the bright red sun burned into their long-dark facets, reflecting back and forth between them endlessly, blinding them forever!"
WE DIE
WE DIE
WE DIE!


"Then Arla-La hit them with a single stone from her sling, and..."
CRACK
"They split into millions of shardlings!"

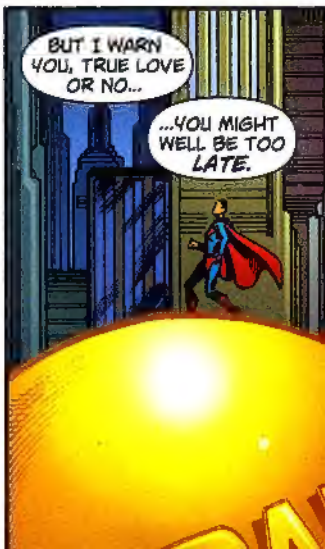
YOU DEFEATED MY BEASTS OF MEMORY.
FORTUNATELY, THEY WERE NEVER TRULY ALIVE, QUEEN. I HAVE YOUR SHAWL.
I FIND I'M NO LONGER COLD, PRINCE.

TSARITSA.
LOVE DOESN'T COME FROM POSSESSION. HOW COULD A SLAVE EVER TRULY MAKE YOU HAPPY?
AND I AM ALREADY PLEDGED.

I ASK THAT YOU RESPECT MY WISHES IN THIS, AND THAT YOU SEND ME BACK TO HELP MY CHOSEN ONE.
I AM NO PRINCE.
I'M JUST A MAN.

A MAN IN LOVE.

...
AWAY WITH YOU, THEN.
AND MAKE HASTE. I CAN NO LONGER STAND THE SIGHT OF YOU.


BUT I WARN YOU, TRUE LOVE OR NO...
...YOU MIGHT WELL BE TOO LATE.

ISN'T IT A DREAM?
I WON'T TELL YOU WHAT IT COST...
WELL, ALL RIGHT. IT WAS ALMOST FORTY DOLLARS.
CAN YOU IMAGINE? FORTY DOLLARS?
ALL FOR YOU, LOIS. THAT'S HOW MUCH LOVE I HAVE FOR YOU.
WILLIS, LISTEN TO ME.
I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT ME.
YOU'RE JUST CONFUSED. YOU SAW ME ON TV, AND YOU THOUGHT...
...WELL, YOU THOUGHT UP A FANTASY, THAT'S ALL.
UNTIE ME, AND BY TOMORROW, YOU'LL BE WITH PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU, I PROMISE.
OH, LOIS, LOIS, LOIS. DON'T YOU GET IT?
AFTER TONIGHT, THERE IS NO TOMORROW.
FOR EITHER OF US.
WILL YOU PUT THE DRESS ON NOW, PLEASE?

A DOLL?
YOU'VE GIVEN HER ANOTHER DOLL?
HUSH, MAR. YOU'LL WAKE THE CHILD.
NALA, YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT RECENT SIMULATIONS FIND THE STRESS-RELIEVING VALUE OF A "DOLL" IS NOT BENEFICIAL IN THE LONG-RANGE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PROGENY.
NONSENSE. IT'S MERELY A REMINDER OF HER FAVORITE HEROINE, ARLA-LA, FROM MY GRAND-MATER'S STORIES, HUSBAND.
YOU'RE TELLING HER THOSE INCONCEIVABLE STORIES AGAIN?
REALLY, NALA. JUST AS OUR CULTURE HAS EMBRACED TRUTH AND SCIENCE, YOU STAND IN THE WAY OF YOUR OWN CHILD'S MENTAL UNFOLDING WITH THESE FOOLISH, USELESS FALSEHOODS.
BUT THEY'RE NOT FALSE, HUSBAND.
I KNOW OUR FUTURE IS STERILE AND COLD. I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL ALWAYS BE THUS FOR OUR PEOPLE.
WE WILL REDISCOVER WONDER AND JOY AND FEAR AND DREAD, AND BE BETTER FOR IT.
YOU...YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT.
I DO.
THE STORIES, MAR...THEY CONTAIN LESSONS, IN A WAY OF TELLING THAT CHILDREN KEEP IN THEIR HEARTS FOREVER.
LESSONS TO BEHAVE, TO BE KIND, TO BE GENEROUS, AND ABOVE ALL...
...TO BE CLEVER. I ASK YOU, HUSBAND...
"...WHAT POSSIBLE HARM COULD COME OF THAT?"
SLEEP WELL, DEAR ONE. KEEP ME ALIVE.
DREAM OF ME.
DREAM OF ME.
NEXT: A CONTAGION OF MADNESS

Camelot
Scans
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PREHEAT
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